

# LampLighter

8 Tevet  
Vayigash  
**910**  
25 December  
5770/2009

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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, begins with the word Vayigash, meaning "Judah came near." Judah approached Joseph with the greatest confidence and asked that his brother, Benjamin, be released so that he could take him back to their father, Jacob.

Implied in the word Vayigash is the meaning that Judah was prepared for all possibilities when he approached Joseph, even the possibility of war. Judah was not intimidated by authority. His approach was in an aggressive manner and the language which he used was harsh.

Why did Judah adopt such a strong stance? The answer is that Judah had taken personal responsibility for Benjamin's welfare, as he explained, "For your servant became surety for the lad."

Jacob had been particularly concerned about the welfare of Benjamin, after the brothers didn't return with Simon. He suspected that perhaps they had killed him or sold him. Therefore, Jacob was unwilling to allow Benjamin to go with his brothers until Judah guaranteed that he would bring him home safely. In keeping with his promise, therefore, he was willing to do anything, even go to war.

But how could Judah have even imagined that he could win a confrontation with Joseph? Joseph and his brothers were few in number. Joseph, by contrast, was the second only to the ruler of Egypt, with an army and the entire populace of the country under his command.

Judah could never have been victorious in a war conducted against Joseph. Nonetheless, Judah was ready to take even this drastic step should it become necessary. He accepted his role as guardian of Benjamin without question.

Jacob had other remaining sons, all of whom were healthy and sound; however, after the loss of Joseph, Benjamin was last remaining child of his mother, Rachel, who had been Jacob's favourite wife. Therefore, Judah realized that self-sacrifice was required to save the life of this Jewish child. He was even willing to give up his own life.

From this we learn an important lesson for every Jewish father and mother. When G-d grants them the blessing of a child, it carries with it a great responsibility. Sometimes it is even necessary for parents to demonstrate self-sacrifice, to make sure that their children are protected against any negative occurrences, G-d forbid.

One area in which the greatest efforts must be expended is that of education. Providing a Torah-true education for Jewish children is so important that parents may be required to demonstrate self-sacrifice so that their children are properly educated in an environment which ensures their spiritual, intellectual and physical growth.

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## Hugs

By Shimon Posner

The Communists rose to power when Naphtali – "Tolchik," to his friends – was young. His father didn't like the smell of it all, and told Tolchik to become a *shochet* – to master the intricate, exacting practice of kosher ritual slaughter. The training takes time and the pay is lousy. "Become a *shochet*," said Tolchik's father. "If you'll be a *shochet*, you'll stay a Jew."

Tolchik the Shochet and his wife raised their children under the Soviets. By the early 1950s, though, the entire family had managed to escape, most of them with false passports; except for their son, Meir, and his growing family.

Their other son, Berel, had escaped together with Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother, posing as her son. Upon arrival in New York, Berel became a diamond cutter, maintained his "filial" status with Rebbetzin Chana and developed a warm relationship with her son, the Rebbe of Lubavitch. Tolchik and his wife, together with their daughter, settled in Montreal. Their other son Dovid was in Antwerp. Tolchik was happy, but for Meir's being held by the Soviets.

There is a custom to receive matzah from one's Rebbe before Passover. Naturally, Berel would be doing so. "When you receive matzah from the Rebbe," Tolchik told his son Berel, "mention your brother, Meir, to him." "But do not ask for just a *brachah*, a blessing," continued Tolchik. "Ask for a *havtachah*, an assurance, that my Meir will make it out alive."

Berel had never pushed anyone into doing something they did not want to do. Furthermore, a chassid does not demand of his Rebbe; but Berel never refused his father.

As the Rebbe handed matzah to him, Berel mentioned his brother, Meir, and the Rebbe gave his *brachah*. "My father requests your *assurance* that Meir will come out," Berel responded.

The Rebbe's face grew dark and his hand shook. "*Shlep mir nisht beim tzung* (Don't wrench words out of me that I cannot say)!" the Rebbe answered with rare sting, and added, "My father-in-law [the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe] accomplished greater things than this."

Berel saw tears begin to fall from the Rebbe's eyes. The Rebbe gave Berel another piece of matzah. "You will give this to your brother."

"My brother, Dovid, in Belgium?" Berel asked.

"No. Meir. Not necessarily in America, but somewhere close by."

A few years later, the family got word that Meir had plans to spirit his family across the border with forged passports; he failed. More years passed. Berel held the matzah for his brother. Eighteen years he held onto that matzah; which the Kabbalah calls the "Bread of Faith."

Then they heard the news. Meir is free! With his wife! With his sons! With his daughter! They received visas to Canada ("not necessarily America, but close by...") and Berel got himself to Montreal just as fast as he could. Berel hadn't seen his brother in over twenty years. He ran towards his brother. His brother ran towards him. He gave his brother the piece of matzah; and then they fell into each other's arms.

Berel's story explains the behaviour of Jacob in our *parshah*. Jacob mourned his lost son, Joseph as dead for over twenty-two years. When he finally saw him, it was a miracle, but Jacob did not kiss him; he was saying the *Shema*. Berel showed me, on the night I heard the story, that a moment of faith does not separate long-lost loves. It holds them together.



## When There is Nowhere to Turn By Mirish Kiszner

It was the perfect apartment and the purchase was almost completed when, the shekel dropped steeply against the dollar. Aleksander Guravich – who had spent the better part of his week signing reams of paper at the bank, the mortgage broker, and a number of free loan societies – was suddenly obliged to come up with an additional forty thousand NIS. He didn't know where to turn.

Weaving his way through the narrow streets of Geulah on his way to the synagogue, he hardly glanced at the plastered notices glaring from the stone walls, proclaiming the names of the latest terrorism victims. His mind was elsewhere as he tossed a few coins into an outstretched palm. Numbers and figures spiraled and twisted around in his mind.

As he passed Stefansky's supermarket, a wave of wistfulness overcame him as he started reminiscing about his first years in the Holy Land, and how far he had come to date.

Upon his arrival to Israel from the Soviet Union, the employment agency had assigned him to care for Simon Stefansky. Aleksander had been surprised to learn that the elderly man, bent, frail and trembling, owned a veritable financial empire. That this wiry man suffering from dementia had once been a successful business tycoon was hard to imagine.

Simon's children, immersed in the business, were relieved when the care of their father went over to Aleksander. Simon, however, wasn't shy to express his own estimation of the caretaker. "You want to kill me," he remarked rather frequently. "You're here to finish me off."

There were rare days when Simon enjoyed some lucid moments, times when the two of them would sit together on a park bench and make small talk. Mostly though, Simon sat quietly, as though deep in thought, sometimes muttering softly, his eyes roving along the walls and ceilings. Aleksander cooked for him, managed his household affairs and took care of all his need with warmth and devotion.

As Aleksander turned left into a narrow side street, the synagogue came into view. Its white stones were bathed in the golden light of the afternoon sun. Once, at precisely such a time of day, when the same golden shafts of sunlight poured into the open windows of Simon's kitchen, Aleksander found the old man standing

beside the cutlery drawer, pointing a kitchen knife at him.

"You want to kill me, that's why you're here," said the erstwhile business man.

"I'm here to care for you," Aleksander said, keeping his voice low. "Do you want me to leave?"

The old man said nothing.

"All right, then. I'll leave."

Simon dropped the knife, it fell with a clang. Then he wept.

"Who are you?" he asked after he'd calmed down.

"I'm Aleksander, your caretaker. Try to keep that in your memory."

"Don't make me believe that lie," he said.

Aleksander gently led Simon to the couch, fed him his dinner and tenderly put him to sleep.

Aleksander sighed. "You ought to be thankful for all the good in your life," he chastised himself as he skipped up the stairs, taking them two at a time. "You have a family, health, and an income, be grateful."

In those days, on a caretaker's salary, his income wouldn't have sufficed for the purchase of a home. His current profession as a chiropractor improved his lifestyle, he had to admit. But his real wealth had come not from aligning vertebrae.

Good fortune had shined on him when he'd discovered his Jewish roots. The return to his heritage had connected him to G-d, to His Torah. In its holy tomes, Aleksander had unearthed luminous jewels the likes of which he hadn't encountered while traipsing through the quarries of Tibet-Indian and Chinese philosophy. For this newfound oasis, where truth and joy actually existed, he was profoundly thankful.

In fact the first time he'd entered this synagogue altogether was an experience that had engraved itself into his mind. Standing behind Simon's wheelchair with his long dark hair caressing his shoulders, and the vibrant colors of his t-shirt screaming out from among the black-hatted, white-shirted congregants, he felt awkward and wanted only to merge into the walls of the synagogue, to remain unnoticed.

Then a young man with laughing eyes and *tefillin* wrapped around his arm approached him. "Why don't you come pray?"

The question was thrown at him with the nonchalance of a friend who wonders at his friend's hesitation before crossing the threshold of his home. The invitation pleased him; it was a gesture that made him feel welcome. Yet there was no denying the barricade that stood between him and the prayers.

"I don't know how..." he answered simply.

"So?" the man said. His dancing, laughing eyes stood still for a moment, in thought. Then the corners of his mouth smiled again and he patted Aleksander on the back. "We'll teach you," he said.

And here he was, a few short years later. The synagogue was quickly filling up as more congregants unhooked themselves from their day's activities. The voice of the one leading the services rang out, "*Ashrei...*" Aleksander closed his eyes savouring the distinct tenor. He had been taught well; first the *Shema*, later the *Amidah*. These kind people had appreciated him, looked beneath his exterior. In this synagogue he wasn't defined then as *the Russian caretaker*, just like *the chiropractor* wasn't his identity now. Here he always was Mr. Aleksander Guravich, a respected person all his own, a valuable member of society.

The prayers now concluded, the congregants dispersed. Only Aleksander, immersed in conversation with his Creator, lingered still. "G-d," he murmured. "If you want me to buy the apartment so that my wife and I could have a place to live, so that we are able to raise our children...if this is Your will, help me, please. I have no one to turn to but You."

A feeling of peace settled over him like a winged dove. He'd handed his worries over to the Master Planner. It was time to go home, to spend time with his family, time to wrap up the day in tranquillity and harmony.

When he entered his two-room apartment, the folding cots and cribs had already made their appearance across the dining room floor as it did every evening. The children freshly bathed and pyjama clad clambered over him and giggled loudly as he tossed them playfully in the air. Elena, his wife, turned from the tiny kitchen sink and greeted her husband with a strange look.

"You didn't tell me you spoke to them..." she said.

"Spoke to whom?"

Elena wiped her hands in her apron and hastened to undo the strings. Aleksander, realizing that something was afoot, said not a word as he followed her movements with his eyes. Then, from the single kitchen cabinet, Elena removed a small envelope.

"A loan, likely?" she asked with an expression of mingled rapture and curiosity.

Aleksander cast a quick glance at the sender's address. "Family Stefansky," it read.

"This just came by a private messenger service: maybe half an hour ago. You did talk to them, didn't you?" queried his wife.

"Not in a year, I haven't," replied Aleksander. "Not since Simon passed away."

He turned the envelope over in his hands. A check slipped out. Under "Pay To" the name Aleksander Guravich was written in a neat scrawl. Amount: 40,000 shekels.

"A loan?" asked Simon's son when Aleksander phoned him. "No, why should we send you a loan?... A mistake? No, nothing of the sort... 4,000 instead of 40,000? Not at all."

"The litigation attorney recently finished reviewing our father's will. Our father, of late memory, wanted 40,000 shekels to go to you."

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ISSUE 910

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

All the fast days connected to the destruction of the Holy Temple are destined to be abolished in the time of the Moshiach. Indeed, they are destined to be turned into festive days, days of rejoicing and gladness, in accordance with the verse (Zech. 8:19), "Thus says the L-rd of Hosts: The fast of the fourth month ... and the fast of the tenth, shall be to the house of Judah joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons...." (Laws of Fast Days 5:19)

# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## Business Affairs

*Freely translated letter*

*25 Sivan, 5712 [1952]*

Greetings and Blessings!

I received your letter...in which you describe the state of your business affairs, your considerable debts, etc. etc. You write further that you have a possibility of selling some of your properties, but that you find yourself unable to decide what you should do. Above all, it appears from your letter that you are dispirited, so that as a matter of course your trust in G-d has weakened.

The phrase I just used was "above all." As is stated in our holy sources in general and in the literature of Chassidus in particular, every-thing depends on bitachon, trust. A man's trust is the measuring stick of the extent to which his material affairs are bound and fused with the Creator. If this fusion is complete, it is certainly impossible for anything to be lacking, because in the worlds Above, the concept of lacking is utterly non-existent.

In accordance with your request, I mentioned your name in connection with the fulfillment of your needs when I visited the holy resting place of my revered father-in-law, the [previous] Rebbe. That said, since you asked for my advice, I hold that you should focus on toiling on yourself - to fortify your trust in G-d to the greatest extent possible.

In truth, having the attribute of trust means that even if according to the laws of nature one sees no way out, in one's mind it is beyond all doubt that everything will be good. This is in a way that is actually visible and manifest to fleshly eyes, with regard to having an ample livelihood, sound health, and so on. From the perspective of the world Above, considerations of nature are quite immaterial.

Accordingly, once a person raises himself up and adopts a stance that is even slightly above the ground - that is, he brings himself to the realization that since he is a believing Jew, he is utterly certain that there is no master over him but G-d alone - he can draw down and actualize this certainty here, too, so that in this physical world, too, considerations of nature will not affect him adversely (G-d forbid).

I firmly hope to G-d that if you will fortify your trust to the utmost, you will immediately see a change in the Providence which governs your material business affairs and that your situation will begin to improve, and to proceed from good to even better.

In addition, it would be appropriate to immediately begin giving tzedaka (charity) as you used to do, and increase your accustomed donations at least slightly. I look forward to hearing good news from you on all the above.

With blessings for material success, and may the teachings of Rabbi Shneur Zalman [founder of Chabad Chasidism] be fulfilled in your life - that G-d grants Jews materiality, and they transform materiality into spirituality.

# A WORD from the Director

*This coming week, on Sunday (December 27), we commemorate the start of the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon. The siege resulted in the eventual destruction of the First Holy Temple nearly 2500 years ago. This day is commemorated as a public fast day.*

*The strength - both of the obligation to fast and its positive influences - of the Tenth of Tevet stems from the fact that it commemorates the first of the tragedies associated with the destruction of the Holy Temple.*

*Thus this date begins the process of destruction. It is well known that the beginning of any process contains more power than the subsequent stages and for this reason, there is added power to the Tenth of Tevet. The positive influences of the Tenth of Tevet are connected to the fact that a fast day is a "day of will" when our prayers and teshuva are more willingly accepted by G-d.*

*As we are taught that "the beginning is wedged in the end," and the ultimate "end" purpose of the destruction of the Holy Temples will be the rebuilding of the Third and Eternal Holy Temple, the Tenth of Tevet is an auspicious day to hasten the coming of the Redemption.*

*Of course, our most fervent prayer is that the Tenth of Tevet not be a day of mourning but be turned into a day of celebration and joy with the coming of Moshiach. Thus, by our immediate decision to increase our acts of goodness and kindness, our performance of mitzvot, study of Torah, and specifically the giving of charity, which brings the Redemption closer, we are showing G-d that our actions are in consonance with our heartfelt prayers. May the realization of those prayers happen in the immediate future.*

*J.I. Gutnick*

### 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet

The 10<sup>th</sup> of Tevet is observed as a day of fasting, mourning and repentance, in remembrance of the siege of Jerusalem.

More recently, this date was chosen to also serve as a "general *kaddish* day" for the victims of the Holocaust, many of whose day of martyrdom is unknown.

The fast begins at dawn (72 minutes before sunrise) and ends at nightfall (see back for exact times). Between these hours, it is forbidden for any adult above bar or bat Mitzvah to consume food or drink.

Pregnant and nursing women are excluded from the obligation to fast on this day. Someone who is ill should consult a rabbi. Even those who are exempt from fasting, such as ill people or children, shouldn't indulge in delicacies or sweets on this day.

It is permitted to wake up early before the fast begins to eat, provided that before going to sleep, the person had in mind to wake up and eat.

During the Shacharit prayers we recite *Selichot* (elegies). The selichot are printed in the back of the Siddur. The "long Avinu Malkeinu" is also recited during both Shacharit and Minchah. The Torah is also read during Shacharit and Minchah. After the reading of the Torah at the Minchah, a special fast-day Haftarah is read.

During the Amidah of the Minchah prayer, all those who are actually fasting add a small section, the aneinu, to the Shema Koleinu blessing.

# It Happened Once...



A chassid went to the Baal Shem Tov in Medzibuz and said, "Rebbe, I want to see Elijah the Prophet."

"It's simple," said the Baal Shem. "I'll tell you what to do. Get two boxes and fill one with food and the other with children's clothes. Then, before Rosh Hashanah, travel to Minsk. On the outskirts of town, right before the forest, is a dilapidated house. Find that house, but don't knock on the door immediately; stand there for a while and listen. Then, shortly before candle lighting time at sunset, knock on the door and ask for hospitality."

The chassid went home and told his wife he would be away for the holiday. "How can you leave your family?" she said. "The children want their father to take them to the synagogue!" He told her, "I have a once in a lifetime chance to see Elijah the Prophet!" Finally, she agreed that it was something that he could not pass up.

So he went and did as the Baal Shem Tov told him. He filled the parcels with food and clothing and went to Minsk, where he found the broken-down house at the edge of town. He arrived shortly before evening and stood in front of the door, listening. Inside, he heard children crying, "Mommy, we're hungry. And it's Yom Tov and we don't even have decent clothes to wear!" He heard the mother answer, "Children, trust in G-d. He'll send Elijah the Prophet to bring you everything you need!"

Then the chassid knocked on the door. When the woman opened it, he asked if he could stay with them for the holiday. "How can I welcome you when I don't have any food in the house!" she said. "Don't worry," he said, "I have enough food for all of us." He came in, opened the box, gave the children the food, and they ate. Then he opened the other box and the children all took clothes for themselves, this one a shirt, that one a jacket, the other one a hat. He was there for two days, waiting to see Elijah the Prophet. He did not even sleep. How could he sleep? How often do you get a chance to see Elijah the Prophet? But he saw no one.

So he returned to the Baal Shem Tov and said, "Master, I did not see Elijah the Prophet!" "Did you do everything I told you?" asked the Baal Shem Tov. "I did!" he said. "And you didn't see him?" "No, Rebbe." "Are you sure?" "Yes, Rebbe, I didn't see him!" "Then you'll have to return for Yom Kippur," said the Baal Shem Tov. "Go back before Yom Kippur, with a box of food, to the same house. Again, be sure to arrive an hour before sunset, and don't knock immediately. Wait for a while and just stand in front of the door, listening."

The chassid went back to his wife and told her he would be away for Yom Kippur. "How can you leave your children again?" she asked. "But the Baal Shem Tov says I'll be able to see Elijah the Prophet, like one of the great *tzaddikim!*" he said, "How can I not go?" His wife agreed that it was worth going away for two or three days if he could see Elijah the Prophet.

So he went back to Minsk before Yom Kippur. This time, he went earlier and stood in front of the door, listening. Inside he heard children crying, "Mommy, we're hungry! We haven't eaten the whole day! How can we fast for Yom Kippur?" "Children!" said the mother. "Do you remember you were crying before Rosh Hashanah that you had no food or clothes? And I told

you, 'Trust in G-d! He'll send Elijah the Prophet, who'll bring you food and clothing and everything else you need!' Wasn't I right? Didn't Elijah come and bring you food and clothing? He stayed with us for two days! Now you're crying again that you're hungry. I promise you that Elijah will come now, too, and bring you food!" Then the chasid understood what his master, the Baal Shem Tov had meant. And he knocked on the door.

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

**He sent Judah before him to Joseph, to direct him to Goshen (Gen. 46:28)**

Our Sages explain that Judah was dispatched to Egypt before everyone else "in order to establish a house of learning...that the tribes be able to study Torah (Hogim baTorah)." Jacob understood that their sojourn in as corrupt a place as Egypt would pose a threat to the spirituality of the Jewish people, and thus prepared the antidote before their arrival. The word "hogim" implies a study so deep and comprehensive that the Torah actually becomes part of the person.

Moshiach is therefore described as a "hogeim baTorah," as the power to redeem the Jewish people from exile can only come from one whose entire existence is absolutely unified with the Torah itself. (*Likutei Sichot 5750*)

Our Sages comment that the entire Jewish people is often referred to as "Joseph" in the merit of his having provided sustenance for them during the years of famine. "Providing sustenance," however, also has a spiritual connotation, and refers to Joseph's willingness to help his brothers even after he was wronged by them. This quality of doing good rather than taking revenge is the inheritance of all Jews, and is derived from our Patriarch Jacob. (*Likutei Sichot Vol. 5*)

**And Joseph said to his brothers, Is my father still alive? (Gen. 45:3)**

When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers he recognized that they had many doubts about his identity. He therefore repeatedly asked about his father and not his mother (who had died before he came to Egypt), as if to tell them that only their true brother would be privy to this information. (*Our Sages*)

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

#### PARSHAS VAYIGASH 9 TEVET • 26 DECEMBER

<b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>	CANDLE LIGHTING:	8:25 PM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS :	9:10 PM
<b>SHABBOS MORNING:</b>	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	MINCHA:	8:20 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	9:31 PM
<b>WEEKDAYS:</b>	SHACHARIS: SUN- FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	8:35 PM
	MAARIV:	9:25 PM
<b>SUNDAY - FAST OF THE 10 OF TEVET</b>	FAST BEGINS:	4:18 AM
	MINCHA:	8:15 PM
	MAARIV:	9:15 PM
	FAST ENDS:	9:15 PM

#### CANDLE LIGHTING: 25, 27 DECEMBER 2009



Begins 25th	Fast Begins 27th AM		Ends 26th	Fast Ends 27th PM
8:25	4:18	MELBOURNE	9:31	9:15
8:12	4:28	ADELAIDE	9:15	9:00
6:26	3:31	BRISBANE	7:24	7:11
6:54	5:12	DARWIN	7:47	7:36
6:25	3:12	GOLD COAST	7:23	7:15
7:05	3:43	PERTH	8:06	7:52
7:49	4:13	SYDNEY	8:51	8:37
8:01	4:14	CANBERRA	9:05	8:50
8:29	3:46	LAUNCESTON	9:40	9:21
8:23	4:24	AUCKLAND	9:28	9:13
8:37	3:56	WELLINGTON	9:47	9:29

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

יצוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty  
to redeem His people speedily in our days.